

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 12073 170535Z

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7396

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 12073

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ETRN, ELAB, PINT, IN

SUBJ: BOMBAY PORT CONGESTION

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO CALCUTTA
MADRAS ON 16 OCT 1973 FROM BOMBAY IS RPTED FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE

BOMBAY 2019

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ETRN, ELAB, PINT, IN

SUBJECT: BOMBAY PORT CONGESTION

REF (A) BOMBAY 1941 (B) BOMBAY 1994 (C) BOMBAY 1624

1. INADEQUACY OF EQUIPMENT AND WAREHOUSE SPACE IN BOMBAY
DOCK ARE, LABOR AGITATION EXACERBATED BY PERSONAL POLITICAL
RIVALRIES BETWEEN DOCK LABOR LEADERS, AND PROPENSITY OF VESSELS
TO ARRIVE IN GROUPS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO CONTINUING BOMBAY PORT
CONGENSTION PROBLEMS. CONGESTION REACHED PEAK DURING AUGUST
AND FIRST HALF OF SEPTEMBER, LEVELLED OFF SLIGHTLY IN LATE
SEPTEMBER AND IS NOW ON UPSWING AGAIN.

2. LATELY, LABOR UNREST HAS ESPECIALLY INTENSIFIED CONGESTION
PROBLEM, LAST WEEK STEVEDORING FOODGRAINS, CHIPPING AND
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PAINTING WORKERS IN PORT WENT ON STRIKE FOR THREE DAYS DEMANDING

HIGHER WAGES AND OTHER BENEFITS. MORE SERIOUS STRIKE WHICH STILL UNDERWAY BEGAN ON OCTOBER 11 WHEN 3,000 CRANE OPERATORS CLERKS AND FOREMEN OF SHANTI PATEL'S BOMBAY PORT TRUST EMPLOYEES UNION (BPTU) STRUCK. WORK STOPPAGE ATTRACTED SYMPATHY STRIKE FROM SEVERAL HUNDRED MEMBERS OF S.R. KULKARNI'S TRANSPORT AND DOCK WORKERS UNION (TDWU) (COMMENT-- PRESENT PORT STRIKE HAS POLITICAL UNDERCURRENTS. PATEL ATTEMPTING USE STRIKE TO WEAKEN S.K. KULKARNI'S PREIMIENT POSITION BOMBAY DOCKS. THIS COMPEITION DESCRIBED PARA 7 REFTEL C BEGAN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WITH SALVAT ESISODE. KULKARNI IS PRESIDENT OF ALL INDIA PORT AND DOCK WORKERS FEDERATION OF WHICH TDWU AND BPTU ARE TWO LARGEST AFFILIATES IN BOMBAY.) WORK STOPPAGE ORIGINALLY SPARKED BY MINOR ALTERCATION BETWEE SEVERAL WORKERS AND POLICE PATEL HAS ELEVATED SITUATION TO FULL-SCALE STRIKE, WHICH INCLUDED SECTION OF KULKARNI'S BPTU, AND PRESENTED TO PORT AUTHORITIES FORMAL DEMANDS FOR INCREASES IN OVERTIME RATES, BONUS PAYMENTS AND FRINGE BENEFITS.

3. WORK STOPPAGE AFFECTING 60 SHIPS IN DOCK AND 21 IN MIDSTREAM AVERAGE WAITING PERIOD FOR VESSELS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE LATEST STRIKE WAS 20 TO 25 DAYS. KARMAHOM SHIPPING CONFERENCE WHOSE MEMBERS OPERATE REGULAR LINER SERVICES BETWEEN BOMBAY,EUROPE AND UK, HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THAT FREIGHT SURCHARGE FOR BOMBAY PORT WILL BE INCREASED FROM EXISTING 10 PERCENT TO 20 PERCENT EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 29.

4. PORT CONGESTION, PARTICULARLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH EVACUATOR SHORAGE (REFTEL B) COULD AFFECT UNLOADING OF FOODGRAINS SHIPMENTS FROM USSR WHICH EXPECTED TO BEGIN ARRIVING UPCOMING WEEKS.
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